Discussion guide

Thanks for your interest in leading a salon! Below are some guidelines for how to prepare for and facilitate the discussion. These are meant as suggestions, not rules, so use your judgment!

Coming up with a topic

- Our goal is to discuss issues at the **intersection of genome sciences and society**. If you don't have a topic in mind, or if you have an idea, but are unsure whether it would be a good fit, feel free to email us for suggestions.
- **You don't need to be an expert to lead a discussion**. Since most people in the audience probably aren't experts either, even just giving a summary of a handful of news or academic articles on the topic can lead to a really great discussion.
- Here are **some examples of interesting suggestions** we've gotten for potential topics:
  - what are current and alternative funding models for science?
  - what are current and alternative publication practices in science? - what is the role of theory and models in biology?
  - what is synthetic biology?
  - is there a reproducibility crisis? (reproduce what?)
  - what is the use of history and philosophy of science for science? - how might genomics affect the cost of medicine?

Logistics

- Each discussion will be coordinated by one of the salon organizers (currently, Michael, Bryce, Jolie, Michelle). Your **salon coordinator** will check in periodically to see if you want/need help preparing the discussion. We can suggest resources, connect you with people on campus, or just offer a sounding board. Our goal is to offer help, not to hound you.
- Your salon coordinator will also take care of the following: - room reservations
  - publicity
  - sign-in sheet
  - snacks/drinks

Finalizing a topic

- A few weeks before the beginning of the quarter, we'll ask you to **finalize a topic** and (short**) discussion description**. This is partly for publicity purposes, and partly to help you hone in on a subject that you'd like to discuss. Here's an example from the first salon. In this case, the topic is "Public understanding of science," and the description is the blurb that follows.

  Thursday, June 23, 4:30pm (Foege S-110)
  Public understanding of science
  Katherine Xue (Genome Sciences) and Molly Gasperini (Genome Sciences)

  Everyone agrees that science communication is important, but no one seems to agree how it should be done. Science communication--particularly science

writing--is subject to criticism from multiple directions: for hype, for oversimplification, for inaccuracy, for uncritically taking scientists at their word. This session will explore the complications and contradictions of communicating science to the public. What do these criticisms suggest about how science communication is and should be done? What is it, really, that the public should know about science?

- In general, we suggest that you articulate an area of interest, and then pose one or two questions that you think you might discuss. It's not critical that you stick to this, more that potential participants get an idea of the kinds of questions you're interested in.

Preparing a handout

- Before the discussion, **prepare a one-page handout** giving a short overview of the topic and some specific points you would like to discuss, along with a few references to articles of potential interest. Examples from past discussions are here: https://depts.washington.edu/genomicssalon/archive
- Send us the handout at least 2-3 days before the meeting so we can send it out in advance via email and print copies for the day of.
- **Define jargon**, as we hope these meetings to be accessible to people from a wide variety of fields, such as philosophy and genome sciences

Leading the discussion

- Each salon session starts with the discussion leaders giving a **short (~10-minute) introduction** on their topic, including some potential discussion points. Some leaders have also given a second introduction in the middle to break it up into parts, which can be really effective in providing structure and focus. We discourage the use of slides, but a whiteboard is available if needed.
- The introduction is followed by an **open-floor discussion** guided by the presenters. Interjecting with new ideas or examples throughout the discussion can help it stay interesting and focused. If you feel it straying from the topic or getting cornered in a specific topic, feel free to step in and redirect it.
- A major goal is that **everyone is included in the discussion**, so if only a few people are talking over and over again, feel free to call on other audience members. And if the discussion starts becoming overly technical, please make sure any jargon is defined.

Helpful things we've picked up

- It's good to have **a mix of the general and the specific**. While the general is necessary for framing the topic, specific examples and case studies can help bring concepts to earth and stimulate conversation.
- It's nice to ask people to **introduce themselves** at the beginning of the discussion, just to provide some common ground.